

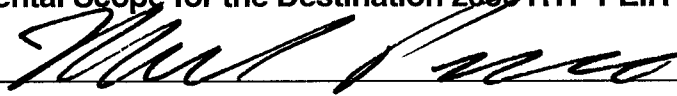
REPORT

TO: Energy and Environment Committee

FROM: Jennifer Merrick, SCAG Planner, 213-236-1926, merrick@scag.ca.gov

DATE: September 10, 2003

SUBJECT: Environmental Scope for the Destination 2030 RTP PEIR



Recommended Action:

Approve the scope of environmental analysis for the Destination 2030 Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR).

Introduction:

The Notice of Preparation for the Destination 2030 PEIR was released on June 9, 2003, and was received and circulated by the State Clearinghouse (SCH) on June 13, 2003. The Energy and Environment Committee (EEC) and the Regional Council approved the initial environmental scope when they approved the release of the NOP.

In response to NOP comments and a desire to encourage additional participation in the RTP PEIR process, SCAG will convene an RTP PEIR scoping meeting on September 16, 2003. Oral comments will be accepted at the scoping meeting, and written comments will be accepted until September 25, 2003.

The information below summarizes the scope of the Destination 2030 PEIR, as presented in the NOP and subsequent joint policy committee workshops. The comments from the scoping meeting and any written NOP comments received after September 10th were not available at the time that this report was drafted. During the presentation of this item at the October 2nd EEC meeting, staff will present changes, if any, to the information presented here, based on the additional NOP comments and comments provided at the scoping meeting.

Scope and Content of the Destination 2030 PEIR:

As a Program EIR (PEIR), the Destination 2030 PEIR is a "first -tier" CEQA document written to consider "broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures" (CEQA Guidelines §15168). The document will evaluate regional-scale environmental effects, such as direct and indirect effects, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts. The PEIR will include alternatives and mitigation measures to offset potentially significant effects.

Impact Categories Included in the PEIR:

The impact categories listed below are consistent with those in the NOP, with the exception of the addition of "Hazardous Materials" per an NOP comment received.

- 1) Land Use
- 2) Population, Employment, and Housing
- 3) Transportation
- 4) Air Quality
- 5) Water Resources
- 6) Noise
- 7) Public Service and Utilities
- 8) Cultural Resources
- 9) Biological Resources
- 10) Geology
- 11) Energy
- 12) Hazardous Materials
- 13) Visual/Aesthetic Resources

Alternatives Included in the PEIR:

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the evaluation of a "reasonable range" of alternatives to the proposed Plan. These alternatives must: 1) fulfill most of the basic objectives of the Plan, 2) be ostensibly feasible, and 3) reduce or minimize the adverse environmental effects of plan.

The Draft 2004 RTP and Draft Program EIR will evaluate a coordinated range of alternatives, each comprised of a set of transportation projects, programs, and strategies, and the growth projection resulting from their implementation.

The **No Project** alternative is a future scenario resulting from minimal improvements to the transportation system. Only those programmed transportation projects that have federal environmental clearance by 2002 are assumed. This fulfills the RTP Baseline and CEQA No Project requirements.

The **2001 RTP Modified** alternative is an update of the adopted 2001 RTP to reflect the most recent growth estimates and transportation planning decisions. For example, this alternative reflects the 8-mile CenterLine alignment adopted in July 2003 in Orange County, and it includes the Measure A local sales tax extension passed in November 2002 in Riverside County.

The **Growth Vision (Hybrid)** alternative builds upon the 2001 RTP Modified alternative by assuming additional transportation/land use strategies that encourage compact

growth, increased jobs/housing balance, and centers-based development, where feasible, in all parts of the region.

The **PILUT 1 (Infill)** alternative builds upon the 2001 RTP Modified alternative by assuming additional transportation/land use strategies that encourage a substantial portion of future growth to concentrate in existing urban centers through infill and redevelopment. This alternative has been designed to reduce consumption of open space and habitat.

The **PILUT 2 (Fifth Ring)** alternative builds upon the 2001 RTP Modified alternative by assuming additional transportation/land use strategies that encourage growth toward a more decentralized urban form, and an improvement in the jobs/housing balance in the outlying areas of the region. Specifically, PILUT2 will focus on improving and expanding infrastructure to utilize undeveloped land on the outer edges of the urbanized area.

Evaluation of Destination 2030, the Preferred Alternative:

The Regional Council is scheduled to select a single Preferred Alternative in autumn 2003. The Preferred Alternative will be fully evaluated in the PEIR, for the impact categories listed above. Each of the additional alternatives will be analyzed as well. The alternatives analysis will focus on providing a means of making comparisons between the Preferred Alternative and each of the other alternatives.

The Draft PEIR is expected to be released to the Regional Council at their December 2003 meeting, followed by a 45-day public comment period. A joint public hearing on the RTP and the PEIR will be scheduled for winter 2004. The Final RTP and PEIR are scheduled to be adopted by the Regional Council in April 2004.

Summary:

This scope of environmental analysis to be conducted in the Destination 2030 PEIR is consistent with the information presented in the NOP, adjusted according to public comments and policy committee direction as of September 10, 2003. Additional information and revisions based on comments received at the September 16th scoping meeting or before the close of the NOP comment period on September 25th will be presented to the committee at the October 2nd meeting.

Fiscal Impact:

There are no fiscal impacts.